

THE ST. LOUIS REPUBLIC

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DECEMBER CIRCULATION.

W. B. Carr, Business Manager of The St. Louis Republic, being duly sworn, says that the actual number of full and complete copies of the St. Louis Republic printed during the month of December, 1900, all in regular editions, was as per schedule below:

1. Copies, 1,070.....75,990

2. Sunday.....85,780.....78,740

3. Sunday.....81,000.....78,080

4. Sunday.....79,490.....76,900

5. Sunday.....77,810.....75,600

6. Sunday.....77,310.....75,600

7. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

8. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

9. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

10. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

11. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

12. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

13. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

14. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

15. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

16. Sunday.....77,340.....75,600

Total for the month.....2,470,075

Less all copies spoiled in printing, left over or died.....169,835

Net number distributed.....2,300,180

Average daily distribution.....76,426

And said W. B. Carr further says that the number of copies returned or reported unsold during the month of November was 98 per cent.

W. B. CARR.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11th day of December 1900.

Notary Public, City of St. Louis, Mo. My term expires April 30, 1901.

BAR OOD BOODERS.

In the eager scramble of machine Republicans for nomination to the House of Delegates there is an object lesson which should not be lost by good citizens who propose to make reasonably sure of keeping boodlers and grafters out of local office during the World's Fair period.

It is this prospect of possible loot arising from the necessity for World's Fair legislation by the Municipal Assembly which has caused the hot Republican rivalry for seats in the House of Delegates. The outlook for booty will be bright indeed for gangsters if they can secure election to the House this spring. It is not strange, therefore, that they are working like beavers to make sure of nominations for seats in the House.

Upon the Democratic and Republican parties alike devolves the duty of nominating only clean and honest men to the House of Delegates for service during the World's Fair period. The party organization, with its power to control nominations, should not be surrendered to the influence of the gangsters. The necessity for World's Fair legislation must not be made the occasion of a hold-up by boodling Assemblymen. If the two parties are faithful to the public welfare they will see that grafters are kept off their respective tickets.

JUST VERDICT WANTED.

Citizens who have watched the trial of Supply Commissioner Meier await the verdict of the City Council, which it is announced will be given to-day, with some anxiety.

If a final decision is rendered this afternoon, it will mark the close of a case that has been fraught with unnecessary delays from the beginning. From the time that The Republic made its sensational revelations regarding the methods in the office of the Supply Commissioner, nearly a year has passed.

Soon after The Republic's exposure, the Grand Jury recommended Mr. Meier's removal. The Mayor merely made a perfunctory inquiry and dropped the matter.

Mr. Wiggins, an earnest and upright member of the Council, insisted upon an investigation. A special committee was appointed during the summer. With not much assistance from other members, Mr. Wiggins and Captain Hodges pressed the investigation. When the report finally was made, three charges were preferred against Mr. Meier and brought before the Council. Testimony regarding these charges have now been heard after a day of week.

Obstacles and postponements have given anything but a sense of security to citizens who desire a clean public service. There is a feeling that the best interests of the city have been trifled with. It is hoped that the verdict to be rendered this afternoon will not justify a confirmation of this view.

NEW CITY HOSPITAL.

When the contractor begins the work of wrecking the old City Hospital, preparatory to grading the site for the erection of the new pavilion institution, the occasion should be one of sincere rejoicing on the part of all thoughtful citizens.

For nearly five years now the city has been without an adequate hospital structure, the old rickety used for hospital purposes being little more than a ramshackle firetrap disgracefully deficient in all that goes to make a modern hospital. Under a proper municipal administration a new and commodious building would have been erected long before this, but it so happened that the destruction of the old hospital occurred just before the beginning of the most costly and inefficient administration St. Louis has ever known.

Nor should it be forgotten that, had Mayor Ziegenheim and his gang, been allowed the free exercise of choice, there

would now be no prospect of a new City Hospital for years to come. Under the first impulse of resentment caused by the passage of the police law, the Mayor favored the sacrificing of the hospital fund to meet the salary-grab demands of his ringsters. The compelling force of public sentiment, promptly brought to bear against such a proposition, alone prevented the carrying out of this venal plan. The money with which the new hospital is to be paid for would now be in the pockets of ringsters but for this righteous pressure of public sentiment.

It is to be hoped that work on the new City Hospital will be vigorously pushed until the structure has been completed. The need for such a structure is great indeed. Only through the mercy of Providence has appalling disaster, due to a hospital occupation of a most dangerous building, been averted—disaster of a nature that would have covered the municipal good name of St. Louis with shame in the judgment of the outside world.

DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

It is quite likely that the members of the Missouri Legislature begin to realize some of the essential difficulties connected with what is called franchise taxation. That vague and indefinite phrase fairly expresses a general theory of taxation, but legislators must deal with something more concrete than mere generalizations. And franchise taxation as a concrete proposition is far from being as simple as it seems when put forward as an abstract theory.

Of course, the difficulties involved in the correct solution of any particular legislative problem should not drive the conscientious legislator from his consideration. Nor, on the other hand, can he be offered as excuse for adopting an incorrect solution simply because it is easy. The Missouri Assembly must pursue its consideration of franchise taxation with intelligent regard for the welfare of all the people of the State, and with discriminating understanding of the actual effect to follow any contemplated legislation.

There is no escape from the necessity to determine with absolute accuracy what is meant by a franchise. Nor is there escape, either, from the necessity to determine the relation of a new line of taxation to that already imposed by existing laws. The right of corporate existence can be called a franchise derived from the State, in the broad use of the word, but the Legislature must none the less consider whether it is expedient and wise that the business done by an incorporated stock company shall pay a higher tax than would be paid by an individual or a partnership. To do otherwise would be to risk the adoption of a policy of discouraging the corporate form of doing business, and there can be no doubt that the people of Missouri have no such intent.

Even if it be determined that they are not calling for a burdensome and penalizing tax on all incorporated business enterprises as a consideration for the right of existence granted by the State, and that what the people do want is taxation of those franchises granted to quasi-public corporations which give them special and exclusive privileges, many difficulties still remain. It is still necessary to determine how far franchises of this sort are taxed under existing laws. No sensible legislator who intends to be reasonable and fair means to create a new tax on any class of property, whether it be tangible or intangible property, which is already fully taxed. And there would not be done knowingly should not be done ignorantly and blindly.

A communication from an unusually well-informed correspondent, who has gathered valuable experience in actual service in the Missouri General Assembly, which appears in another column of to-day's Republic, directs attention to the danger of this blunder. But the writer is himself blind to the chance of an equally grave blunder. He can see the mistake that would be made in taxing the right to do business under a franchise of franchise taxation, but apparently cannot see that his own suggestion of such amendment to the laws as will assure the assessment of corporate property or holdings at a great value is a narrow application of a great value truth. Business corporations are certainly not more favored by assessments under true value than are business partnerships and individuals.

What is needed more than anything else in this matter of taxation is a mode of assuring the assessment of all property, corporate or individual, at its true value on an equal basis. If this could be done the State, as well as its county and municipal subdivisions, could easily raise an adequate revenue at a lower rate of taxation than now prevails. It would not be necessary to threaten one class of business men with the infliction of a penalty simply because they do business as incorporated companies; it would not be necessary to project a tax on the income of corporations while exempting the income of partnerships and individuals go free.

SOME FACTS.

Legislators would serve the State of Missouri by looking into the future before passing a sweeping franchise-tax law.

Among the other interesting circumstances they could take into their calculations the recent tendency of manufacturing and other enterprises in this city to cross the river and locate in or near East St. Louis.

At East St. Louis locations the burdensome bridge arbitrary is avoided; coal is cheaper; switching facilities are more convenient and, as a rule, ground for sites is much cheaper. These advantages have already taken across the river into Illinois some of the most extensive St. Louis enterprises. It is well known that a number of others are contemplating the change. Evidently, a new taxation, thoughtlessly applied to productive business as well as to quasi-public services, would accelerate this movement.

St. Louis already pays more than twice its natural share of taxation in support of State government. Whatever reduces the number of taxed institutions in St. Louis directly and indirectly reduces the State's revenues, and either throws new burdens on taxpayers in the counties or curtails the incomes of State institutions.

No provisions in the law could embrace for taxation purposes most of the

enterprises when once they are moved across the river. They could easily take out their articles of incorporation in Illinois and transact nearly all their business on that side.

Kansas City business is similarly situated. St. Joseph might readily come to the same condition. The balance which decides location on one side or the other of State lines may quickly be decided by the difference between legislation in Missouri and that in Illinois or Kansas.

Generally it is not a good rule to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

DEFEAT THE GANGSTERS.

All the influence of good citizenship should now be exercised in a determined effort to defeat the bill before the Legislature providing for the election of members of the St. Louis School Board from districts instead of at large.

Public school funds are threatened with looting by this measure. The welfare of the schools, the protection of the school revenues from the control of extravagant or corrupt political gangsters, the maintenance of the School Board as a body of educational direction rather than as a political machine, are the issues at stake.

The necessity for at once awakening to the danger contained in the Collins bill arises from the fact that the schemers who are working to compel a return to the old evil system of district school directors and political control of the schools count upon public indifference as giving them their best chance to trick the Legislature into passing the Collins bill. The people of St. Louis must not permit this great wrong to the schools of their city. They should see to it that the Collins bill is vigorously fought in Jefferson City, and that legislators for the youngest daughter, Miss Grace, are working to compel a return to the old evil system of district school directors and political control of the schools count upon public indifference as giving them their best chance to trick the Legislature into passing the Collins bill. The people of St. Louis must not permit this great wrong to the schools of their city. 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